

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EB-11 TRSE-00 AID-20 AGR-20 COME-00

SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03

SS-20 DRC-01 IGA-02 /131 W
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O R 091405Z APR 74

FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5992

INFO USCONCSO

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUENOS AIRES 2543

USCINCSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, US, AR, OAS

SUBJECT: ARGENTINE SHIPS IN CUBA TRADE

1. SUMMARY: PRESS ITEM IN BUENOS AIRES HERALD REPORTS AN ARGENTINE SHIP ON WAY TO CUBA CARRYING 9,100 TONS OF CORN. EMBASSY HAS BEEN TOLD THAT TWO MORE SHIPS ARE PRESENTLY BEING LOADED WITH GRAIN FOR DELIVERY TO CUBA. IN A PUZZLING DEVELOPMENT, MILGP CHIEF OF NAVY SECTION WAS TOLD BY SENIOR GOA NAVAL OFFICER THAT CUBA TRADE PROBLEM NO LONGER EXISTS SINCE HIGH-LEVEL SETTLEMENT EXPECTED THIS WEEK. EMBASSY ENDEAVORING THROUGH ALL CHANNELS TO DEVELOP MORE INFORMATION AND OBTAIN CONFIRMATION OR REFUTATION OF REPORTS. END SUMMARY.

2. FEB 8 BUENOS AIRES HERALD REPORTS THAT AN ARGENTINE FREIGHTER OF THE LINEAS MARITIMAS ARGENTINAS (ELMA) IS BOUND FOR CUBA IN COMPLIANCE WITH RECENT ARGENTINE-CUBAN TRADE DEAL. IF REPORT CONFIRMED (AND EMBASSY IS ENDEAVORING TO PIN DOWN ON URGENT BASIS), EMBASSY ASSUMES AN ELMA VESSEL WOULD FALL WITHIN PROVISIONS OF US LAW SANCTIONING NATIONS WHOSE VESSELS ARE ENGAGED IN CUBAN TRADE. FOLLOWING APPEAR-
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ANCE OF STORY, EMBASSY HAS DECLINED COMMENT ON LOCAL UPI

CORRESPONDENT'S INQUIRY AS TO ACCURACY OF STORY AND PROBABLE US REACTION. HOWEVER DEPT MAY EXPECT QUERIES ON SAME SUBJECT IN NEAR FUTURE, PARTICULARLY IF SPANISH LANGUAGE PRESS PICKS UP STORY AS ANTICIPATED.

3. LOCAL BUSINESSMAN TOLD ASSISTANT AGRICULTURAL ATTACHE THAT THERE ARE REPORTS THAT TWO ARGENTINE SHIPS OF TEN THOUSAND TON CAPACITY ARE PRESENTLY BEING LOADED WITH GRAIN FOR SHIPMENT TO CUBA AND PROMISED TO PROVIDE EMBASSY WITH FURTHER DETAILS AND/OR CONFIRMATION ON CONFIDENTIAL BASIS.

4. CHIEF OF NAVY SECTION, MILGP, ON THE OCCASION OF A BUSINESS MEETING WITH SENIOR ARGENTINE NAVAL OFFICIAL POINTED OUT PROBLEMS THAT ARGENTINE SHIPS IN CUBAN TRADE WOULD PRESENT TO OUR BILATERAL POLITICAL AND MILITARY RELATIONS. LATTER REPLIED THAT HE HAD IT ON AUTHORITY THAT MATTER WOULD BE RESOLVED THIS WEEK ON VERY HIGH LEVEL. UPON BEING INFORMED OF NEWSPAPER ARTICLE CONCERNING GRAIN SHIPMENT TO CUBA, CHIEF OF NAVY SECTION QUERIED ONE OF SENIOR NAVAL STAFF AS TO WHETHER PROBLEM WE BOTH WISH TO AVOID WAS UPON US. IN REPLY, OFFICIAL REITERATED THIS CONFIDENCE IN AN EARLY HIGH-LEVEL SETTLEMENT.

5. COMMENT: IF REPORTS THAT ARGENTINE VESSELS ARE ENGAGING IN TRADE WITH CUBA PROVE CORRECT, THEN EVENTS WILL HAVE BEEN SET IN MOTION WHICH, IF USG INSISTS ON INVOKING 620 (A)(3) OF FAA, WILL INEVITABLY GIVE RISE TO DAMAGING CONFRONTATION IN GOA-USG RELATIONS. EMBASSY UNAWARE OF BASIS FOR COMMENTS BY SENIOR LEVELS OF MILITARY THAT SETTLEMENT OF CUBAN TRADE ISSUE IMMINENTLY EXPECTED.
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Message Attributes

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